

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-8 and 12 without prejudice.

Please amend claim 10.

Please add new claim 13.

Claims 1-8 and 12 (canceled).

Claim 9. (Original) A self-venting microwave cooking container for use with a vertical fill automated machine, comprising:

a tray portion having a bottom surface and a side wall extending therefrom and terminating at an upper rim that is in a plane substantially parallel to the bottom surface of said tray portion, said upper rim circumscribing an opening into the interior of the tray portion;

a bag portion defining an opening for receiving food product at one end, said bag portion also defining a lower opening that is substantially the same size and shape as the opening into the interior of the tray portion , allowing a bottom side of the bag portion to be joined to the upper rim of the tray portion, with the lower opening of the bag portion substantially in registry with the opening into the interior of the tray portion; and

a venting configuration in fluid communication with a volume enclosed within said tray portion and said bag portion;

wherein the opening into the bag portion is sealed after the food product has been received by said container for subsequent cooking of the food product in the container, and

wherein said venting configuration causes preferential venting at a predetermined location when the food product is cooked in said container.

Claim 10. ~~The microwave cooking container as recited in claim 9, wherein said venting configuration comprises:~~

A self-venting microwave cooking container for use with a vertical fill automated machine, comprising:

a tray portion having a bottom surface and a side wall extending therefrom and terminating at an upper rim that is in a plane substantially parallel to the bottom surface of said tray portion, said upper rim circumscribing an opening into the interior of the tray portion;

a bag portion defining an opening for receiving food product at one end, said bag portion also defining a lower opening that is substantially the same size and shape as the opening into the interior of the tray portion , allowing a bottom side of the bag portion to be joined to the upper rim of the tray portion, with the lower opening of the bag portion substantially in registry with the opening into the interior of the tray portion; and

a venting configuration in fluid communication with a volume enclosed within said tray portion and said bag portion;

wherein the opening into the bag portion is sealed after the food product has been received by said container for subsequent cooking of the food product in the container,

wherein said venting configuration causes preferential venting at a predetermined location when the food product is cooked in said container; and

at least one steam guide defining an indentation along the upper rim of said tray portion and being positioned adjacent a weakened area of said bag portion, such that, when said container is heated, steam and pressure are directed towards the tip of said at least one steam guide, causing pressure to be concentrated adjacent the weakened area of said bag portions, resulting in the bag portion being preferentially broken at the weakened area.

Claim 11. (Original) The microwave cooking container as recited in claim 10, wherein a tab is created when the weakened area of said bag portion is broken, said bag portion additionally including a second weakened area, trailing substantially linearly from the tab, such that the tab may be grasped and pulled in the direction of the second weakened area to facilitate access to the food product.

Claim 12. (Canceled)

--Claim 13. (New) The microwave cooking container as recited in claim 9, wherein said venting configuration comprises:

at least one steam guide defining an indentation along the upper rim of said tray portion and being positioned adjacent a weakened area of said bag portion, such that, when said container is heated, steam and pressure are directed towards the tip of said at least one steam guide, causing pressure to be concentrated adjacent the weakened area of said bag portions, resulting in the bag portion being preferentially broken at the weakened area.--